

AN ADDRESS

ON

INDIVIDUALITY OF CHARACTER,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE MIAMI CHAPTER

OF THE

ALPHA DELTA PHI SOCIETY,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In preparing this Address for the press, the Author has purposely omitted many passages which were delivered, aiming only to preserve the substance and main doctrines of it.

It was first published in the June number of the Examiner and Hesperian, but on account of the numerous and mortifying typographical errors which crept into that impression, the Author has thought it no more than justice to himself, and to the Society, to reprint it in another form.

Cincinnati, July 20th, 1840.

ADDRESS.

ONE of the greatest ideas ever revealed by the Divine Mind, or developed by human thought, is found in that solemn estimate which the Savior of the World made of man. Primarily it was a religious idea, but it has a scope and circumference which embrace all the capital interests of human life. It teaches us the natural dignity of Man—not of man generically, not of humanity, but of an individual human being.

This is the primary fact, not only of Christianity, but of modern civilization and social progress. It is the historical and political idea which has revolutionized the world.

Christianity was the first institution which recognized this indestructible worth of the mere man; it was the first institution to individualize the human race, to count its multitudes by units. Before its benignant light rose to distinguish individual forms and features, all was the confusion and aggregation of twilight, in which, although man could be discerned by his erect form and natural majesty, yet he was seen in disastrous uniformity, and as much herded as the wild asses of the desert.

We find in history two great antagonist principles, between which, the destiny of the human race has appeared to vibrate—the one a principle of slavery, which looks on men as cattle; the other, a principle of liberty, which esteems them a little lower than the angels. The one has been active in detraction, the other in vindication; the one with elective eye, choosing some to honor, and some to dishonor; the other appointing every being who bears the image of God, to a sphere of dignity: and the degree of esteem in which the individual man has been held, generally indicates the degree of liberty, the point of civilization, and progress of any historical epoch.

It is, perhaps, the necessary condition of Political Philosophy to observe men as they are united in families, states, and empires. Its view is telescopic, embracing a wide horizon, too comprehensive to be minute and analytic. And although it must of necessity imply and

include in its great aggregates the integral parts, yet the individual parts are not specially brought out, are not set in relief, and the consequence is, that engrossed with the splendor and magnitude of the panorama, we fail or omit to distinguish the thousand miniature forms which compose it. This may account for the fact that History alone, so imperfectly and slowly taught the world to entertain a just opinion of the individual man. From its ample scroll, Princes, Orators, Patriots, and Usurpers, had tuition. It reflected, as a mirror, all the multitudinous past, and radiated its illumination over the present and the future. But its light was not that steady, searching light, which pierced to the dividing asunder of the compact, agglutinated ranks.—Pagan Philosophy with its rush-light poured an occasional, but ambiguous ray upon the truth; and ever and anon a slave, an *Æsop* or a *Terence* would erect his full height above the blank uniformity and level of his caste, compelling homage by the natural force of intellect, and reiterating the lesson, that, though branded with an ignominious birth, though contemned and spit upon, though fettered with bonds of iron, “A man’s a man for a’ that.”

These were but partial and indistinct developements of the truth, and it was reserved for our holy religion in the person of its Divine Master, to give perspicuity and authority to it; first, by publishing it from his own lips, and then by incorporating it into every feature of his moral and religious system.

That system did not debase the high, but erected the lowly and the humble, the poor and the meek of the earth. It spoke to man as man. Taking no observation of the distinction of caste, of rich and poor, of rulers and people; it was impartial as death. It brought in the throngs from the highways and hedges, from the fields and work-shops, and set them before the faces of kings. “*Honor all men,*” said the Apostle, —“*God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth,*” said inspired History, and with these new principles society began to ferment in its deepest foundations.

These principles were not made the *basis* of political institutions, until the North American States incorporated them into the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution; but we find them to a greater or less extent, alleviating the severity and inequality of the social state from the period of their earliest promulgation. And wherever entertained, they have proved conservatory, imparting to society the strength and solidity of numbers, and to its impulses the fairness and right reason of the people. Their tendency has been to produce that equality of condition in which every class of minds, and each individual mind, would exert a just and natural influence in the

conduct of human affairs ; in which the reason and will of every member of society shall become a part of that aggregate reason and will which constitute the law.

What began so auspiciously under the sanction of Christianity, has been progressing under the influence of many connate and subsidiary causes. Indeed, it is true, that in both ancient and modern times, man has rapidly approximated his true position, wherever society has been let alone long enough to give its natural elements full play ; or wherever great enterprises and a revolutionary crisis have called out the highest order of mind. Under all the disadvantages of an unequal distribution of power and privilege, society has generally righted itself whenever great enterprises have given employment to its innate energies.

The old appliances and feeble expedients of terror and cruelty will serve to conduct society where all is tranquil and passive. But the whirl-blast comes, the enterprise of a nation is awakened and seeks a conductor—Superstition preaches a new Crusade—War points its thunderbolts, the earth rocks with tumult, and the heavens lower with portentous augury. Then who is sufficient ? The imbecile and voluptuous Prince quails : The purple of royalty is vain ; its blushes cannot give color to the cheek pale with alarm ; its ample drapery cannot throw decent disguise over the knees that smite together in fear. Then the great guiding minds sweep up to their sphere, power finds its natural repositories, old alliances are dissolved, new combinations ensue, and the organization presents the natural variety and just relations of men.

It is thus that revolutions, whether disastrous or triumphant, in regard to the ultimate objects for which they were excited, must always turn to the advantage of the people, by throwing into relief the natural greatness of man. They open new paths to distinction and power, and wherever a field of worthy and honorable achievement is thrown open, genius, eloquence and courage become the elements of success, and the value of all fictitious distinctions is depreciated.

Thus War, though its distinctions and array do not equalize men, or place them in their true relative position, often developes in its progress, the comparative individual endowments of those employed in conducting it. It is therefore not a rare fact in history to find the soldier of fortune exchanging the pike and truncheon for the sceptre ; to see the man who was at first counted among the tens and fifties of the rank and file, rising step by step, through the slow grade of promotion, to become by his fortitude, his valor, and his genius, the hero and the chief.*

* Other illustrations might be offered under this topic, all showing that action and enterprise are favorable to the display of this natural greatness of man, and to the proper adjustment of power among individuals in the constitution of society. For a complete view of this subject, the reader is referred to the preface of De Tocqueville's "Democracy in America," by which the idea was first suggested.

All the leading events of History indicate a progress of man towards that condition which he has theoretically attained in the Constitution of our country—a condition in which the human mind is left to its own spontaneous action; in which there is no disparagement, and no favoritism,—a condition in which there is no equality, but where the disparity is adjusted by the Maker of us all; a condition in which every man is numbered, and every man counts *one*.

This state is but imperfectly realized, but it is the one for which every human being, whether descended from Shem, Ham, or Japhet is eventually destined. The tendency is irresistible. No effort of man seems to accelerate or impede it. The movement is like that of the stars in their courses, steady and irrevocable. The hand of God is in it. Let those who are skeptical survey the orbit through which human nature has already climbed. Compare the present, ambiguous as it is, with the past, with the chronicles of the Assyrian and Egyptian empires. Many of the monuments of the oriental civilization remain, and they are types of the spirit which erected them.—How lightly did the Nimrods of the earth sport with human life! What became of the millions who vegetated on the banks of the Indus and Euphrates? What became of that host which Xerxes saw blackening the shores of the Hellespont? Their blood smoked from hecatombs on the red altar of war. How lightly have the task-masters of the earth valued human labor! Look at the Pyramid, eternal as the sands; and the Temple co-eternal with the live rock, out of which its pillars and architraves were hewn. Let the historian traverse the valley of the Nile, and with line let him measure, if he can, or with balance let him weigh, if he can, the mountains of granite planted by human hands. Transporting himself to the time of Cheops or Cephrenes, he sees thousands in the quarries, thousands bending to hopeless toil over the flinty stone, thousands straining every tendon and muscle on the scaffolds to rear those monuments of human slavery.

The army numbered by its squads and legions, and the Pyramid, great for its durability, but stupid for its uselessness, are genuine types of the ancient society. And what do they indicate? Do you not fail amid the array of compact, wedged columns, to distinguish the individual man? The beings in whom was the breath of all that was human appear and disappear in swarms. They did not even find individual graves, but were whelmed by generations into the catacombs and mummy pits.

In contrast with this, observe a picture of society as it exists in the United States. Here then is enterprise such as never before vexed human ease, but it flows in channels which irrigate the whole land.

Here are industry, and labor, but they are spontaneous and directed to useful results,—results which are estimated by their capacity to enrich and bless the mass. Every social impulse, every legislative act, every man's public and private life, and even his habits of thought show that society has received a new radical element ; that it is constructed upon a new class of facts.

It will be seen at a glance, that in all these governments in which human rights have been disregarded, men, taken in ranks and herds, have had a value to their masters, sometimes a high value. The shame and the political error has been to neglect the individual, to esteem him as a fraction, not as a unit ; and, on the contrary, that it is the tendency of right reason, and of popular principles, to individualize the mass ; not to isolate the man, but to number him as an integer. When it is remembered that these, although they do not express the most obvious and remarkable points of contrast, are characteristic ideas of the slavery principle, and of the free principle, it will not be difficult to apprehend the connexion which exists between the progress of liberty in the State, and that generous estimate of the value of a man, which is a primary fact in the study of his rights and duties, and that just measure of political and social partiality and reward which looks to personal and individual merit.

Man is instinctively gregarious. It would be more respectful to define him as a social being, but as that is the formula of another class of ideas, I have chosen the less human, because it is the less ambiguous epithet.

It has been the policy of the slavery principle to avail itself of this tendency to carve society out into convenient and plastic sections, and to cement the individuals of each class by a brazen solder. This holds society stationary. The bonds of *caste* are drawn tighter, and the dividing lines become more distinct, and the chasm which separates one order from another grows wider and more impassable with time. The process of assimilation is facilitated, and in the lapse of two or three generations all the beautiful variety of human character, and capacity, is effaced, and for it, we have an artificial sameness, broken only by an unnatural inequality. In that state progress is impossible ; an arbitrary and inexorable classification, without reference to the individual, breaks down the spirit, forbids all aspirations, and holds everything immutable with the chain and the rivet. Such was the policy of ancient Egypt, such is the state of India and China to this day. And until the lightning of heaven dissolves these chains and cements, and a true faith awakens a feeling of individual responsibility and personal capacity to improve, there can be no amelioration. The

whole theory of *caste*, a theory by which it is proposed to petrify society in some one of its phases and to perpetuate some present condition or existing relation of men, is at war with nature, and an obstruction to social progress, whether it is advocated by the Rajahs and Muftis of the east, or by the money-mongers of America. And the capital mistake lies in this, that it overlooks the personal capacity, the natural fitness, and natural rights of the individual.

It matters but little as to the ultimate influence of this subversion of individuality whether it be effected by priest or politician; by the arbitrary *dicta* of a lawgiver, or by an artificial and uniform system of education. Can it make any essential difference whether men voluntarily divide themselves, or are compulsively divided into sects, parties, cliques and coteries if they move in masses without the exercise of individual opinion? The aggregate amount of reason and thought, the sum of intelligence available for the conduct and government of society, would be the same in either case; and the issue of the same condition, however variously produced, must be uniform, and would be uniformly disastrous.

Are there any indications in the state of American Society of an undue prevalence of the spirit of associated action, and of the decline of the just individual power and liberty? I think there are; and among the most obvious, I would name,

1st. *The ascendancy of Party spirit in the direction of political affairs.*

2d. *The tendency manifested to systematize education, and to compel a conformity to one degree of progress and developement.*

3d. *The despotism of majorities, and the intolerance of the individual voice and the weak party.*

4th. *The number and objects of voluntary associations.*

In the first place, then, let us consider the ascendancy of party spirit in the direction of political affairs.

One would conclude from a careless observation of American Society, that if there was any subject in which the popular mind was instructed, or in which there was enlisted a universal activity of thought, it is the subject of our political relations. The Hall of Legislation, the forum, the street, and the market place, resound with the tumult of voices hoarse in the discussion of politics. Political knowledge is accessible to every citizen, whilst the humblest have a motive which should stimulate them in the assertion of mental independence, and the dignity of individual opinions, in the fact of their political responsibility and power. A large body of men are politicians by profession; they live by keeping the excitement up, and they ply without scruple

all the weapons of rhetoric, of truth, sophistry and falsehood, to persuade and goad on the people into a feverish passion for debate.

And in appearance, the interest is all pervading. It arrests the busiest crowd in the street, and hushes the noisiest, to listen to some pot-house oracle. The miser leaves his pile untold; the smith rests on his anvil; the husbandman stops in the furrow to discuss affairs of state—and yet this appearance is all deceitful. It is only another illustration of the fact, that men may have all the attributes of thinking beings, and all occasions and inducements for their exercise, yea, and all the common indications of being actually and warmly occupied in thought, and still not think with any freedom, or enjoy any realization of truth. For we know that on these same topics, so warmly agitated in the popular mind, there is more of assertion, and of passionate declamation than there is of cool inquiry, and upright reason. Opinions and statements are received on trust; arguments and principles are acquiesced in and appropriated without analysis.—Some political Anak whose height towers up into the empyrean of thought, shakes his ambrosial curls, and the nod sends swift obedience through long ranks of servile partizans.

Every party has its greater and its less Divinities; its Olympic Council, and its household Gods, its Python oracle, and its witch's cauldron. These are, all in their turn, consulted, and their responses alternately sway large bodies of men. Not unfrequently some party shibboleth, a bold epithet, or a mere form of words is the only league which holds thousands together through good and through evil report.

No body of men can long consist without intelligent direction. Some subordinating intellect must preside over the multiform elements. But how few are the repositories of this intelligence. A few gifted minds—and they may as easily be the Catalines as the Catos of society—coin and circulate the political ideas which pass current through half a nation. The mass look only to the image and the superscription. Parties move like a compact, coincident mass. They are conducted through all the evolutions of a political campaign; through marches, and countermarches, to the onset and in the retreat, with the order and unanimity of a Macedonian phalanx. The well disciplined party man, who has been whipped into the traces until he is submissive and docile, rectifies and quadrates all his individual opinions by some procrustean method; and for all the purposes of right government, might as well be struck from the rolls of citizenship. He contributes nothing to the stock of intelligence and reason which is to govern the nation. He may swell with stentorian voice the clamor of expression, but he presents no new

views; he does not investigate in the light of his own mind, and of his own personal condition.

The only intelligent object in the universal suffrage, is to collect all the wisdom derived from the greatest variety of human experience and condition. For it is a singular fact in the history of political ideas, and one humbling to the pride of intellect, that sound views do not depend so much upon the wisdom and sagacity of men, (for then the government of the *aristoi* would be the best,) as upon their personal condition and circumstances. Hence the common citizen is often a wiser politician than a Pericles or an Augustus. No mind is so ingenious or comprehensive as to appreciate or compass the true interests of a widely diversified state of society. There must be a universal induction of opinions which shall embrace the individual intelligence of every being whose interests are involved; and if a single individual fails to contribute the knowledge of his own singular mind, and peculiar circumstances, there is an element omitted in the calculation, and the theory of popular government so far fails.

I would that this result was more clearly and strikingly illustrated; that it might be seen how deeply liberty is wounded by this one-sidedness and coincidence which characterize a rigid party discipline.

In the second place there are indications of a design to systematize education, and to produce, so far as the influence of culture and discipline can effect it, an even and uniform progress, and development.

One of the most beautiful features of Creation is its wonderful variety. From the cedar of Mount Lebanon, to the hyssop on the wall; from the brightest sun that burns in the firmament, to the palest satellite, we trace a mind of infinite resources, and a hand of various skill. "There is one glory of the Sun, and another glory of the Moon, and another glory of the Stars." Every flower of the field, every blade of grass, and the invisible insects, have their individuality; that something, which distinguishes them from all else that was made.

That bright zone in the heavens which to the naked eye looks like a suffusion of milky light, when viewed through the optic glass, becomes a constellation of articulate stars. This analogy does not stop with the body and form of unconscious matter; it rises up into the moral world, and in the mind of man becomes still more conspicuous and emphatic.

The design and the wisdom of this natural individuality are scarcely less obvious than the fact itself. It is witness of a perfect adaptation in kind and degree, of all the powers of the human being to the manifold objects of his existence, and is in this a pledge of the true harmony of society.

To the eye of human reason, whose purview is narrow, whose com-

prehension is limited, this variety seems confusion. The poor resources, and feeble designing power of man have associated harmony and order, with sameness and uniformity. We do not know how to combine opposite and unequal forces for a single consistent result.

The energies of a universe of mind, free to obey its original impulses; active above and beside the laws of a subduing discipline, transcend our control, and to human apprehension bode nothing but disaster and anarchy. But God can bring order out of confusion. He can survey, while man only inspects. He can comprehend how all things *shall work together*; man only distinguishes the parts in succession. And there is a harmony which corresponds with man's ideas, and there is a higher harmony which is coincident with the will and purposes of God. There are two classes of causes and effects in history, which bear the relation of concentric circles to each other. The inner revolves for the achievement of the great and little purposes of man, the outer circulates in a superior orbit with a power and direction to overrule these purposes. The one discourses the harmony of the earth; the music of the other blends with that strain which angels sang together at the dawn of Creation.

Men have been governed too much; and education has been one of the chief instruments employed to subdue and domesticate them.

Instead of rasping them down to a tame and insipid similitude, education should leave men as distinct and singular as it found them.

Self education is the best, and among other reasons, for this, that it proceeds upon the basis of the particular mind, and follows its instincts, its freest choice and suggestions, and its own inward lights. But in most systems of public education the teacher prosecutes an arbitrary classification, until he has assimilated every mind, by leveling all the sharp, angular features, into a smooth and chubby picture.

I would speak with modesty, but it does appear that the systems of instruction most in vogue do not regard as they ought, the idiosyncrasies of the mind. Educated men are too much alike, and they are often found unequal to those new and sudden occasions which are constantly occurring in a recent state of society—occasions upon which the unharnessed, unhackneyed mind so rapidly seizes, and so powerfully directs.

And the tendency of the great movements which are now afoot in the enterprise of education is rather to augment than to reduce this evil. Government, which like a wide engulfing eddy is about to embrace the whole current of private enterprise, threatens to invade the domestic hearth and the school, and stripping the teacher and the parent of their natural authority, to become the master and pedagogue of the nation.

The State should, perhaps, let the whole subject alone. The less we see and feel the strong hand of government in this matter the better; but if it must interfere, it ought rather to stimulate and foster than to cripple private enterprise.* A variety of modes, and a variety of instructors, inequality of means, and diversity of tastes, liberty to pursue eccentric inclinations, and a free will to embrace or neglect the means of school instruction will preserve some of the freshness and vigor of natural character. But let us have a compulsory, uniform system of instruction, smuggled without healthy quarantine into our country, administered by instructors who have been bred to their profession in the same chambers,† under the same didactic influence, imbued with some technical philosophy of education; and we shall see a generation of men, the fruit of their labors, who will have knowledge without wisdom, intelligence without character, who will be easy to influence, simultaneous in action, a generation dangerous to the State, acceptable only to the wilful and ambitious chief.

The next indication of this spirit to which I would call your attention is, the disposition of the majority, and the growing intolerance of the individual voice and of the weak party.

These points have been so ably discussed and illustrated by a late popular writer on the American Democracy, that there will be no occasion for dwelling on them here to any extent; and I am sensible that after having read what he has written, I shall do little more than paraphrase his ideas.

The fundamental principle of political society in this country is the sovereignty of the majority. But the power of a majority should be exercised with moderation, with a delicate sentiment of regard for its weaker adversaries. For it may rise to be so vindictive and inexorable as to proscribe that independence of thought and free communication which are the predicates of its only just authority. It may infringe rights which are superior to the control of opinion, and then "there is an appeal from the sovereignty of the people, to the sovereignty of mankind."

Freedom of opinion will be the latest acknowledged of all our natu-

* It has been suggested that this language is too strong, and that it impugns our system of common school education. The writer would be very slow to set up any opinion of his against a policy which is approved and supported by the wisest and best citizens of the State. But it may be worth the inquiry to ascertain how far Government can legitimately interfere with the minds of men; and whether Governments do not depart as widely from their appropriate objects, when they aim to make men intelligent, as when they legislate to make them religious.

† It is known to most readers, perhaps, that a petition was presented to the last Legislature of Ohio, praying for the endowment of a Normal School, for the education of professional teachers, with a view of making this a feature of our system of public instruction. The State could as lawfully endow a college of Capuchin Friars.

ral rights. It is already guaranteed from the coarse and vulgar assaults of the rack and the fire; but the exercise of it may provoke from the sovereign power of the country, a frown of wrath and scorn which burns fiercer than the flames of the stake. The result is the same in kind as it always has been, and wider in its scope, because the power of the majority is so completely ascendant, that it cannot be gainsaid, and there is no protection from its tragic resentment, but in "the pantomime of hush."

It has ubiquity in the case with which it may be concentrated, so that no man is so strong as to withstand it, or so humble as to escape it. There is no refuge in the Constitution and Laws, for although these are the recorded judgments of the majority, intended eminently for the protection of the feeble, *they* have been dismantled by the new apothegms of this tyrant which proclaims that public opinion is superior even to the law; an adage which speeds the law when it is tardy, which magnifies its sanctions of terror and retribution when the passions of the hour judge them too lenient.

There is the great majority and the little majority alike remorseless; and whilst opposition of the prevalent voice of the nation, banishes the honest patriot into retirement, you had better never have been born than to differ from the sovereign clique which rules your village or your township.

One of the most obvious effects of this spirit, is thus stated by the Author to whom allusion was made: "In that immense crowd which throngs the avenues to power in the United States, I found very few men who displayed any of that manly candor and masculine independence of opinion which frequently distinguished the Americans in former times, and which constitutes the leading feature in distinguished characters wherever found. It seems, at first sight, as if all the minds of the Americans were formed on one model, so accurately do they correspond in their manner of judging." There have been no local or particular allusions made in these sentiments. I speak of the general temper of the nation manifested on all momentous and exciting occasions; a temper which is harsh, suspicious and fanatical; which unappeased with the triumph that ensues from the destruction of a man's public or political prospects, pursues him with scorn into the bosom of his retirement, and sometimes appears eager to slake its thirst with blood.

In the last place, we have evidence of a decline of the just individual power in the number and objects of voluntary associations.

These have in the various departments of political, social, and religious interests superseded all private, all individual exertion. "We

live in an age of great institutions, and little men." We have in our country seen societies and corporations instituted for almost every thing within the range of human enterprise. There is no catalogue of them. The dignity of this occasion forbids the satire of even *naming* the objects for which many of them have been organized. The idea of a solemn *personal* responsibility, and of an efficient *personal* influence appears to have been abandoned. A moral timidity seems to have paralyzed the single arm, and the individual voice is dumb. A man will not, single handed, and alone, strike for virtue and humanity. He must have the guarantee of associate influence and protection. But if timidity has not been the cause of these associations, it will be the effect of them. They will induce a habit of relying upon bodies of men to do what the individual ought to do, and of shifting the responsibility of personal effort upon irresponsible societies. This will impair the moral power of society. There is *strength* in union, but mere *strength* is not efficient; it is the mild, steady, various influence—

"that gently warms
The universe, and to each inward part,
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue."

The night has not been lit up with one transcendant Sun, but with the myriad of bright stars that wheel and shine through the marble air.

As a people, we undervalue the individual power. It is not weak. It stands conspicuous in the history of the moral achievements of our race. Individual names mark all the great epochs of Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts. Whatever the world has most carefully preserved has been the work of individual minds.

There are three natural, divinely constituted associations, the Family, the Church, and the State, representing the social, the religious and political interests of society. The functions of these have been usurped by a thousand unauthorized, minor associations which interfere with all the public and private relations of life.

It cannot have escaped observation that the tendency of all associations is to abuse and corruption. They are almost always perverted from their original purpose, and conducted by means, and in a way widely oblique from the original views of their founders. Power corrupts those who have its direction. It engenders that pride which mouths the very heavens in defiance. Possessed of it we are tempted to wield it like a thunderbolt, to blast opposition, instead of appeasing it. When it can confer emolument and distinction, there will be an unrighteous scrambling even among good men to gain it, and when

gained it is often directed with no other view than to secure it. The efficiency of a moral influence depends more upon its *purity* than upon its *strength*. Its *purity* is its *strength*. Its energy consists in its simplicity, its candor, and singleness of purpose. It should be gentle, moderate, versatile, but steady to its object. These are qualities more likely to be found among those who act without concert, from the impulse of duty or love, than with those who colleague to gain power, and study success for the glory of the triumph. There is a self approval which attends what we do in our own names in a modest and quiet way, which is an earnest of the power of such efforts to bless the objects of them.

But I must here conclude this discussion. There have been but a few of the most obvious, and general indications of a decline of the individual power alluded to. These may suggest others. And if the importance of preserving this individuality has been exaggerated, or if anything has been rashly condemned as inimical to it, you will judge me with that indulgence which I may claim from the nature of a subject, which in many of its applications is new and difficult.—But if any crude or hasty sentiments shall be the means of provoking reflection on a momentous and interesting subject, I shall not regard the temporary disadvantages of having expressed them.



